

REMARKS

Claims 1-55 are presently pending in the instant application. Claims 31 and 32 have been amended. Support for the amendments can be found on pages 16-23 of the instant application. Claims 18-31 and 34-55 have been withdrawn from consideration.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1-17, 32 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Khare et al. (U.S. 5,726,117).

Khare discloses a composition comprising a zinc component, a colloidal oxide component and a metal oxide component (*see* col. 1, lines 60-63). The composition can also include a Group VIII metal oxide promoter (*see* col. 3, lines 36-37). The promoter can be added to the composition as an elemental metal, metal oxide and/or metal-containing compounds (*see* col. 3, lines 55-58). These can be added to the composition in the original mixture or they can be added after the composition has been dried and calcined (*see* col. 4, lines 6-10). If the promoter is added after the composition has been dried and calcined, then the composition is dried and calcined once more (*see* col. 4, lines 10-14). The composition can also be treated with steam, which can take place either before or after the incorporation of the promoter (*see* col. 4, lines 29-50).

The instant application claims a sorbent composition comprising a reduced-valence promoter and a steam-treated support (*see* claim 1). Applicants argue that the claims of the instant application are patentable improvements over

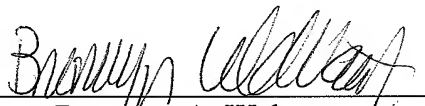
Khare, since they claim a composition having a reduced-valence promoter. In the Khare reference, the sorbents were prepared, formed into extrudates, and then dried and calcined. They are then contacted with hydrogen sulfide diluted with gases such as carbon dioxide and nitrogen (*see* Khare, col. 5, lines 25-67 and col. 6, lines 1-24). The instant application claims a composition with a reduced valence promoter. The promoter is in a reduced valence state because it has undergone reduction. After the composition has been dried and calcined, it is thereafter subjected to reduction with a suitable reducing agent under reducing conditions (*see* Application, page 22, lines 19-20 to page 23, lines 1-3). While acknowledging that the Khare reference is a significant contribution to the art, Applicants state that reducing a composition with a suitable reducing agent under suitable conditions that takes place after the composition has been calcined is a patentable improvement over Khare. One of the objects of Khare is to provide a composition containing a metal oxide. It would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to reduce the composition of Khare because then the composition would no longer contain a metal oxide. According to Khare, the metal oxide promoters can improve physical and chemical properties of the composition (*see* col. 3, lines 37-39). One of ordinary skill in the art would, therefore, not be inclined to reduce the composition because the improved physical and chemical benefits a metal oxide provides would no longer be present.

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In view of the foregoing remarks and amendments, reconsideration and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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